



Planning Ref: 2660010

11th February 2026

Planning Section
Wicklow County Council

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: 2660010 1. Change of use from dis-used health centre to residential rentals comprising 3 No. ground floor short term rentals units and 1No. first floor long term rental unit. 2. Internal and external alterations. 3. Connection to all public services. 4. All necessary ancillary works to facilitate this development (property is a protected structure) AT The Old Health Centre, Delgany, Co. Wicklow.

The Heritage Council was established in 1995 as a statutory body under the Heritage Act 1995 with a council (the board of the body) appointed by the Minister. The Heritage Council is a prescribed body under the provisions of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2010 and SI with its functions under Section 6 of the Heritage Act, 1995. We seek to provide submissions on forward planning, development management and strategic infrastructure developments as they related to Ireland's heritage, namely built, cultural and natural heritage.

The Heritage Council has reviewed the documentation submitted and notes that the subject application:

- Relates to a Protected Structure (RPS 08-09 Delgany Health Centre) described as a three-bay, two-storey house with painted, rendered walls, raised quoins, wide windows on the ground floor with drip labels and keystones and a keystone on the doorcase.
- Is located within the Delgany Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) which comprises the tight clustering of late 18th and early 19 century buildings within Delgany radiating from a much earlier monastic core, this explains the S-shaped street pattern that remains today and lends a distinct and strong village character.)

Delgany village is a place of local historical, architectural and cultural significance, characterised by its organic village form, vernacular building tradition and strong relationship with the surrounding landscape, particularly the Three Trout's Valley. The village developed in an irregular pattern responding to historic road alignments and steep topography, rather than a formal layout. The subject site lies at a historically established junction of Bellevue Hill, Church Road and Glen Road forming a distinguished landmark at this site dating back to 1897¹. Buildings are predominantly two storey vernacular structures, constructed in rendered rubble stone, with dark slated roofs, narrow

¹ Historic Mapping (HeritageMaps.ie)

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sash windows (appears to be uPVC at subject site) and simple painted joinery. Many buildings front onto the street as is the case with the subject site. The architectural character is diverse yet harmonious, with later Victorian shopfronts integrated into earlier buildings and prominent cut-stone churches forming important landmarks.

Overall, Delgany ACA derives its special character from its scale, materials, historic plot structure, landscape setting and streetscape coherence, all of which must be preserved and enhanced by new development or alterations.

The Heritage Council supports the principle of appropriate reuse, refurbishment and continued occupation of historic buildings, including protected structures, where proposals are informed by an understanding of architectural significance and respond sensitively to their historic context. Policies **CPO 8.13 - 8.15** of the adopted *Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028* reflects this position with CPO 8.14 specifically setting out “To positively consider proposals to alter or change the use of protected structures so as to render them viable for modern use, subject to architectural heritage assessment or other relevant expertise that the structure character/appearance and setting will not be adversely affected”.

As noted above, Delgany Health Centre (RPS 08-09) is a protected structure of recognised architectural, historical and social importance located within Delgany ACA. As a longstanding civic building, it forms an important landmark within the village that contributes to Delgany's sense of place, legibility and memory. Its scale, materials and setting reinforce the historic village form and provide visual continuity along the streetscape, acting as a reference point within the evolving settlement. From a placemaking perspective, such landmark heritage buildings play a critical role in anchoring community identity, supporting orientation and fostering emotional attachment to place.

Whilst strongly supporting the principle of re-use associated with the application, the Heritage Council notes that there appears to be very little architectural heritage information regarding the specific historic features involved or works to such features to achieve internal layouts. Therefore, we recommend to the local authority to review its specific policies in the WCDP 2022 – 2028 Policies, namely CPO 8.14, CPO 8.15 and CPO 8.16 and determine what level of information it requires to satisfy this policy. Furthermore, Section 6.4 of the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011) details the type of information that should accompany planning applications. This should also aid the local authority to seek any information it deems necessary, information that is currently lacking.

The Heritage Council support adaptive re-use of our derelict and vacant buildings located within established town centres and Architectural Conservation Areas. While the re-use of such buildings is welcome, there needs to be an appropriate level of information to ensure design proposals for heritage buildings are careful and considered. This is needed to ensure full compliance with the policies of the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028.

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Furthermore, the Heritage Council's remit is confined to heritage matters. We acknowledge that the local authority will need to consider other strategic matters such as housing supply, type and tenure.

I trust these views will inform Wicklow County Council determination of the application.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Doyle
Head of Conservation

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